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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 004244

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR,  
I/GNEA, B/BXN, B/BRN, NEA/PPD  
USAID/ANE/MEA  
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH  
PARIS FOR O'FRIEL  
USCINCENT/CCPA, USCENCOM REAR MACDILL AFB FL  
NICOSIA FOR ILMG  
STATE PASS TO AID

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: JORDAN: MEDIA REACTION ON KING'S ASPEN SPEECH,  
U.S. REGIONAL POLICY

#### SUMMARY

JORDANIAN DAILIES ON JULY 31 ALL LED WITH KING ABDULLAH'S SPEECH AT ASPEN, BUT NOT HIS MEETING WITH ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER SHIMON PERES. REPORTS ALSO INCLUDED THE PALESTINIAN "COMMANDO" OPERATIONS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OFFICE TO IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF THE U.S. ABROAD.

MANY EDITORIAL WRITERS PRAISED THE KING'S "UNEQUIVOCAL DEFENSE OF THE NATION'S INTERESTS," WHILE OTHERS DEALT CRITICALLY WITH DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF U.S. POLICY IN THE REGION.

#### NEWS REPORTS

ALL JORDANIAN DAILIES ON JULY 31 REPORTED PROMINENTLY KING ABDULLAH'S SPEECH AT ASPEN, BUT NOT HIS MEETING WITH ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER SHIMON PERES. DAILIES HIGHLIGHTED TWO ELEMENTS FROM THE SPEECH: THAT IT IS TIME TO ESTABLISH JUSTICE AND PEACE FOR THE PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI PEOPLE, AND THAT THE ARABS' CONFIDENCE IN THE INFLUENCE OF THE U.S. IS LOW.

DAILIES ALSO REPORTED THE PALESTINIAN "COMMANDO" OPERATIONS, IN WHICH "TWO MARTYRS" FELL.

SEMI-OFFICIAL INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI WAS THE ONLY DAILY TO QUOTE THE WASHINGTON POST'S ARTICLE CLAIMING THAT PRESIDENT BUSH HAS DECIDED TO OPEN AN OFFICE "TO IMPROVE AMERICA'S IMAGE ABROAD."

#### EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES

-- A VOICE OF MODERATION  
THE LEADER COMMENTARY IN CENTRIST, INFLUENTIAL AMONG THE ELITE ENGLISH DAILY JORDAN TIMES ON JULY 31 READ: "DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE UN AND IRAQ IS THE KEY TO RESOLVING THE CONFLICT WITH IRAQ. WAR MUST NOT BE AN OPTION. HARDLINERS IN THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION WHO ARE PROMOTING THE MILITARY APPROACH ARE OFFERING A RECIPE FOR DISASTER. THE KING WILL BE PRESENTING SOLID VIEWS ON HOW TO PEACEFULLY RESOLVE THE TWO MOST EXPLOSIVE ISSUES IN THE REGION. THEY ARE ARGUMENTS THAT THE U.S. PRESIDENT WOULD DO WELL TO TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY."

-- IRAN AND SYRIA NEXT  
PROMINENT DAILY COLUMNIST URAIB AL-RANTAWI WROTE IN CENTER-LEFT, INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-DUSTOUR ON JULY 31: "THE HAWKISH CURRENTS IN WASHINGTON AND TEL AVIV DO NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT SYRIA AND IRAN MAY BE AT THE TOP OF THE AMERICAN/ ISRAELI WAR AGENDA AFTER IRAQ. IN FACT, THERE IS ALREADY TALK WITHIN THESE CURRENTS ABOUT A 'MULTI-TRACK WAR.' IT WOULD APPEAR THAT WASHINGTON'S HAWKS HAVE REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT ISRAEL'S DIRECT ENTRY INTO FUTURE WARS IS NO LONGER A BARRIER AGAINST THE DECISION TO WAGE WAR. IF THIS PESSIMISTIC SCENARIO COMES TRUE THEN THE RESHUFFLING OF CARDS TOWARDS CHAOS WILL BE COMPLETE AND THE REGION WILL TRULY JUMP INTO THE UNKNOWN."

-- REFORMING THE AMERICAN "AUTHORITY"  
COLUMNIST USAMA AL-SHARIF WROTE IN CENTER-LEFT, INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-DUSTOUR ON JULY 31: "THE AMERICAN PRESS NOW WAILS ABOUT THE NEED FOR TOTAL REFORM IN CONGRESS, THE WHITE HOUSE, AND WALL STREET BEFORE THE ECONOMY COLLAPSES TOTALLY. BUT PRESIDENT BUSH DOES NOT SEEM TO TAKE THESE DEMANDS SERIOUSLY BECAUSE HE IS OBSESSED WITH FIGHTING TERRORISM AND CONVERTING HIS COUNTRY INTO AN IMPREGNABLE FORTRESS. IN FACT, HE IS BEHAVING LIKE A HIJACKER WHO IS PILOTING HIS HIJACKED AIRPLANE DELIBERATELY TO CRASH IT AGAINST THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY. INTERESTINGLY, ARAFAT CAN

TODAY VINDICATE HIMSELF BY ASKING MR. BUSH TO PUT HIS  
OWN HOUSE IN ORDER BEFORE ADDRESSING ADVICE ABOUT  
REFORMING THE PNA." GNEHM